

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments today. I'm Norine Kasperik, a Wyoming Representative, and I represent the heart of coal in Gillette, Wyoming. The proposed Department of Interior rule change is a classic bait-and-switch plan designed to curtail production rather than benefit taxpayers. Opponents of fossil fuel development would have you believe change is necessary. This proposal is not about maximizing revenue for taxpayers. It's about cutting off production of federal coal from Wyoming and other states. The anti-fossil fuel crowd regularly invokes the same tired argument at a failed attempt to prove that producers are not paying their fair share to taxpayers and should, therefore, have their taxes, royalties, and leases raised. The fallacy of this argument should be noted. Those opposed want the taxpayers to receive no benefit from America's resources. The current system provides stable and very significant tax and royalty revenue. In Wyoming the companies pay to have federal coal, pay royalties on that coal when it is produced, federal income taxes on any profits as well as severance, ad valorem, sales tax, and other fees. Federal, state, and local governments receive over 1.2 billion a year from coal production in Wyoming alone. Wyoming produces approximately 40 percent of America's coal, much of which is federally leased. Producers operating in-state have been good corporate citizens, and Wyoming's share goes directly to building schools as well as other essential services. The claim that the taxpayers are in any way short-changed is misleading at best. Coal provides a stable, reliable mix of electricity resources nationwide. In addition, much of the rest of the country benefits from the affordable, reliable electricity made possible by Wyoming coal. And there are emerging energy markets in the nation that are desperate for the cheap, clean, affordable coal that we produce in our state. We are proud of our resources and utilize them responsibly. The extreme environmental movement will stop at nothing to advance this anti-fossil fuel agenda including advocating for an obscure office within the Department of the Interior to rewrite major energy policy rather than have the critical issues debated and decided by our elected officials in Congress. There is no evidence whatsoever to support claims that the current rules for royalty valuation don't work or that the American people are not getting their fair value. There is a great deal of

evidence that the extremists are prepared to hoodwink the American people, manipulate the media, subvert the law to keep coal in the ground. Regretfully, they're both a disservice to America's economy and energy security. In closing, I'd like to say that I am really proud to be the granddaughter, daughter, and wife of a coal miner. It's been my American dream and my family's American dream. And it needs to be that dream for all of these families for decades to come. Thank you.